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Transactions
of
The Chartered Surveyors' Institution

SESSION 1937-1938.

AT THE ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

Held at the Chartered Surveyors' Institution, Monday, 7th February, 1938.

Mr. ROBERT COBB (President) in the Chair.

NEW MEMBERS.

The following new members were received by the PRESIDENT prior to the meeting and signed the Register:—

Professional Associates :

BLAND, WALTER PAUL JOHN
HENRY, STANLEY ROBERT
HIPGRAVE, CHARLES CARLING HAMILTON
HOGG, GORDON FREDERICK
JONES, B. THORNTON
KACIREK, JOSEPH FRANCIS PETER
LUBBOCK, LESLIE ROWLAND
MCDONOUGH, ALAN JAMES
ROBERTS, KENNETH ERIC
WYNNE-BROWN, KENNETH JAMES

NEW HONORARY MEMBER.

The PRESIDENT announced that, by resolution of the Council passed that afternoon, he had the honour to propose that Lord Saltoun should be an Honorary Member of the Institution.

The proposition was carried with acclamation.

A DISCUSSION took place on Mr. L. H. KEAY'S paper entitled

RE-DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES UNDER THE HOUSING ACT, 1936.

Mr. L. H. KEAY said he desired to amplify the paper which had been circulated and which he imagined came under the classification of "scissors and paste." In the paper he had endeavoured, in perhaps rather colourless official language, to show, first of all, the need for re-development, and then the procedure which had to be adopted, and also to give an example of an actual re-development scheme. He would emphasise the necessity of re-development and the conditions which compelled those concerned to turn their energy in that direction whenever they could. Unfortunately the whole country was not yet conscious of any great need for the re-arrangement of the older portions of most of our larger cities and towns. Most people, he supposed, were what might be termed "main thoroughfare" men; they went from their residence to their place of work taking the quickest route—which was generally one of the most important highways in the district. There were, unfortunately, still very many people to-day who did not know what lay behind the fine boulevards of many of our biggest cities. Members of the Institution would from time to time be called upon to consider, for one reason or another, Ordnance sheets of a particular district. If they studied only superficially the Ordnance sheet of some of the older parts of our great towns, he thought they would see at once the need for sweeping away vast areas of the older residential properties and re-planning those areas in accordance with modern standards. Many of those areas were in the condition they were

to-day because of the uncontrolled development of a century ago. In some parts of those areas groups of houses had been built comparatively recently, and the owners could claim, in a perfectly self-righteous way, that the houses complied in every respect with the building by-laws of the district. Unfortunately it was still possible to build on the old grid-iron pattern and comply with building by-laws and to produce those uninteresting districts in which little provision was made for transport facilities or essential amenities. If one examined the conditions in any of those areas ripe for re-development what did one find? It was a very interesting mental exercise. If one surveyed the buildings in those areas and tried to assess the vast amount of floor space which was wasted where buildings—often domestic buildings—had been converted from their original use, one would find, after a little calculation, that very often nearly 50 per cent. of the actual floor space was not used ; it was wasted. In some buildings only the ground floor was being used. He was not going to speak of the waste in life or in health, which it was difficult to assess, but he would mention the waste in carrying out essential services, such as policing, street cleansing and maintenance.

What had caused those conditions? Originally uncontrolled development, and subsequently inadequate control in the alteration of existing buildings when a district began to change in its character. It could be seen in various stages in the better class districts of the big towns—the big mansion being turned into flats. The same thing had happened in the areas which were or should be the subject of re-development and about which he was speaking that evening.

A condition which was creating difficulty in re-development was due to the patching of many of those areas some twenty-five or thirty years ago. Liverpool boasted, he thought rightly, that, without financial assistance from the Exchequer, it had demolished over 12,000 of its worst insanitary dwellings before the War, but the treatment of some of the cleared sites had created a problem which the Liverpool of to-day was having to face. He was to-day taking down a group of cottages which had been seen at the end of the last century by a gentleman whose name would be familiar to all those present—the Rt. Hon. Mr. John Burns—and who had commended what had been done in Liverpool. Those houses, which were not insanitary, were to-day being demolished simply because they were standing in the way of larger and more adequate planning. Liverpool, in common with other large towns, was to-day paying the price for an over-indulgence of individual liberty. They rightly boasted of their individual liberty in this country, but personally he thought that when it operated against the common weal it was right that it should be controlled.

The problem of re-development was extraordinarily interesting and was made more so by the very difficulties which one encountered. They were many and often most unexpected. He would like to refer to one or two of them, because it might be that in time many of those present would themselves have to deal with the problem. One which would suggest itself to the mind at once was the possible necessity of having entirely to re-arrange public services, such as water supply, drainage, and the mains for gas and electricity. That particularly applied in the city in which he was working because, from the planning point of view, most of the roads were running exactly at right-angles to the direction in which modern planners suggested they should run, and so many of the services had to be ripped up.

There was another curious difficulty in the closing of streets. Large authorities often acquired land under special powers of their own, and although the Housing Act of 1936 gave the local authority powers to close streets in a re-development area, it only gave power to close the streets when the land on each side of the street had been purchased under the Housing Act; and at the present moment he found difficulty in Liverpool because parts of certain streets in the centre of a re-development which could not be closed under the Housing Act. There were other ways in which a street could be closed. There was the proper way of applying to the Court, and there was the other way—to close it and see what happened.

Another curious difficulty arose in a manner which one would never imagine unless one came up against it. Many people had been very pleased at the passing of the Restriction of Ribbon Development Act; they had thought, amongst other things, that it was going to stop the building of bungalows on the wide arterial roads of the country, but how many people would imagine that when preparing a re-development plan in the centre of a great city that they would encounter the Restriction of Ribbon Development Act, and that they might be called upon, on quite a wide road, to provide in addition a service road? That was one of the things about which it was necessary to be very careful. He himself had quite recently been compelled to vary a re-development plan and to omit portion of a zoning for business purposes on a road which was 60 feet wide but which was one of the classified roads.

Among the other difficulties met with was the objection of the industrialists to being disturbed. He could appreciate the reluctance of a commercial or industrial undertaking, which having occupied premises for perhaps half a century or more, at having to be rooted out of a district. But when one looked at the particular premises to which those undertakings were clinging so

tenaciously one sometimes wondered why any strenuous objection was offered. His advice to those present was that if ever they had to find or to suggest alternative accommodation in those cases they should not hesitate to do so, because when industries had moved to another site and had re-established themselves in more modern buildings, the proprietors soon realised that the move had enabled the work to be carried out in a very much more efficient way.

With regard to the difficulties of purchase and acquisition of those large areas, it would be realised that, under the Act, there was a limited time in which the land must be purchased by the local authority, and that it was necessary for the authority to carry out the work unless arrangements had been made with the private owners to do so. Personally he suggested that it was better to have a collection of small areas than one large area. Each of the small areas could be made part of a much larger planning scheme, thus avoiding some of the difficulties of dealing with a very big area at one time.

Perhaps he might be allowed to give some more information than was contained in his paper as to the practical examples which he had instanced in Liverpool. The first area, a map of which was attached to the paper, covered roughly about 62 acres. In addition there were six other areas, and at the present time steps had been taken which would involve the re-development of 278 acres. It was rather a colossal task, but despite the fact that Liverpool was still bearing a colossal burden due to unemployment, it was determined to go on with those big re-development and re-housing schemes. The proposals would affect the housing of 35,000 persons, which, as he had said, was half the population of Liverpool at the beginning of the last century. Some of the features of the Central re-development scheme were of interest because, if the two plans were compared, it would be seen that the smaller roads were almost entirely swept out of existence. The main boundary roads were still there, but they were to be widened to take the increasing traffic; and running diagonally right across the site was one of the new wide roads of Liverpool leading from the mouth of the Mersey Tunnel and intended eventually to connect with the East Lancashire Road. That 120-ft. road had been planned originally by a noted city engineer of Liverpool—Mr. John A. Brodie. The line of the road had created difficulties in satisfactorily re-planning that area. As the members would see, it cut it diagonally. When the scheme was completed no less than three miles of the secondary streets serving the existing insanitary properties would disappear, and 14 acres of land would be absorbed into the scheme. That would result in a very considerable saving to the public services. He would repeat the result of a calculation

which he had made—and which he believed was quite correct because no one had disputed it—namely, that there would be a saving of over £1,000 a year in the collection of refuse in that area alone. Therefore, although the scheme might cost a great deal of money, there would be considerable savings though it might be difficult to estimate them all.

Referring briefly again to some of the advantages of re-development, in the first place it gave an opportunity of establishing ideal conditions where sometimes the worst conditions obtained. In the area to which he had referred in his paper there was only one very small playground. That was to be replaced by one of over three acres. The provision of proper playing spaces was one of the possibilities of re-development. The intermingling of residential properties with industrial properties could be remedied. In this scheme the whole of the residential properties would be together, whilst a reservation for commercial and industrial buildings had been made which would accommodate the small scattered industries which were now dispersed throughout the area. Perhaps the main advantage of re-development was that one could satisfactorily house the town-dweller near his work and lessen the transport problems which existed now in the centre of practically every large city and town.

He was not going to mention that evening the method which he suggested one should employ to carry out those re-development schemes, because they could be carried out either in cottage development or in flats; it depended upon the peculiar conditions obtaining in the town under consideration.

Finally, might he suggest that re-development was one of the cheapest forms of public work. So much could be carried out for a very small expenditure. Someone might ask what those big schemes were likely to cost. The Central Re-development Scheme at Liverpool would impose a rate of about ½d. The cost of re-development schemes could be limited to the statutory contribution of the local authority. There were many ways in which the cost could be recouped.

In respect to licensed premises, it had been possible to arrive at a satisfactory arrangement with the brewers owning licensed premises in the areas. In the particular district under discussion there were 16 licensed houses at the present moment. One would hesitate to acquire those properties compulsorily and pay full compensation. It is proposed to replace the sixteen houses by six, and, he supposed, the same amount of beer would flow through the reduced number of houses as was supplied by the public-houses which now existed—with this exception, that the effect of any big re-development was to reduce the consumption of beer in the district. That was realised by the brewers.

Re-development should be carefully studied. He did not know whether in a few years' time there would be some lean years, but he would suggest that, if there were, then would be the time to go ahead rapidly with big re-development schemes, because they were so advantageous when they were carried out, and they could be carried out at such a very small cost.

Mr. Sydney A. Kelly (Member of Council), in proposing a vote of thanks to Mr. Keay, said that as a citizen of Liverpool it had given him great pleasure to have read the paper and to hear Mr. Keay's amplification of it.

The city of Liverpool was not an ancient one, and its growth during the last century was due almost entirely to the expansion of the docks. An expansion which had been rapid and forced, as would be appreciated when it was remembered that in 1845 the docks occupied a small area around the Custom House, whereas to-day they extended to a distance of ten miles along the Mersey, eight miles of which were wholly in Liverpool. That expansion had taken place so suddenly that, in order to house the people, practically a new city had had to be built. Formerly there had existed what might be termed the worst type of building —tenement houses of two or three storeys, back-to-back houses and the like, and it was not until the advent of the Public Health Act in 1875 that a better type of building began to be erected.

Liverpool had always been faced with its housing question. The influx of workers of a migratory character into Liverpool prior to the War had necessitated a good deal of attention being focussed on the housing and slum conditions that then prevailed. The reconditioning work had been of a somewhat tentative character, in that there had been no comprehensive plan of rehousing people. Although one area—the Hornby Street area—had been very well planned.

Mr. Keay had very rightly said that in the preparation and carrying out of any re-development plan the closest co-ordination between the housing and town planning committees of the responsible authorities was essential and should prevail. If it were possible to provide a comprehensive plan whereby not only the sites for rehousing could be located but also the sites to which displaced industries could be transferred, it would help tremendously in the carrying out of the work with the least disruption possible.

He quite agreed that the road connecting the Mersey Tunnel with the East Lancashire Road was a matter of some difficulty, but he was sure that Liverpool was tackling in the right way the problem of housing its workers so that they would be near to

their employment and at the same time be able to enjoy the amenities of rapid transport to the outer housing areas. In that connection Mr. Keay had already provided something like 25,000 self-contained houses, in addition to flats.

Mr. Keay had mentioned that provision was also being made for churches, schools and licensed premises—and more especially clubs for adults and juveniles. He (Mr. Kelly) pleaded that in any re-development scheme provision should be made for communal centres and communal halls, so that the people who had been transferred should not lose the social amenities which they had previously enjoyed in the centres from whence they had come. The provision of clubs would provide those social amenities.

It was with great pleasure that he proposed the vote of thanks, and as a citizen of Liverpool gave his meed of praise to the city's housing director who had carried out the scheme so far and with such distinguished success.

Mr. JOHN A. F. WATSON (Fellow) (Member of the Central Housing Advisory Committee) said it was with great pleasure that he rose to second the vote of thanks to his friend Mr. Keay, a vote of thanks which he had earned so well by reading such an excellent paper and giving so interesting an address. As Mr. Keay himself said, the first part of the paper was an exposition—and a very lucid one at that—of the law of housing re-development. The second part, and to himself at least the more interesting part, was Mr. Keay's illustration of the practice of re-development in his description of the activity which was going on in Liverpool. There were two or three sentences in the paper which interested the speaker particularly, namely, those which contained reference to the provision of playgrounds, clinics and clubs, a topic upon which Mr. Kelly had also touched. It was on the community and social as opposed to the individual and technical aspect of housing re-development that he desired to address the members for a few moments that evening. But first he desired to read an extract from a letter which had appeared in that morning's *Times* over the signature of Captain Joynson, representing the Kent Council of Social Service. Captain Joynson wrote:—

> " Sir,—We should like to endorse the views of your correspondent that houses alone are not enough. The problem is of much concern to the Kent Council of Social Service, and in North-West Kent we are endeavouring to interest the statutory authorities and the private builders in the need to provide social amenities when developing estates, and for the provision of centres where estates are developed.

"We appreciate the burdens falling to local authorities with each new development, but the co-operation of the statutory authority, builder and voluntary organisation could do much to mitigate the state of affairs existing on many of these new estates.

"We do find that there is a complete lack of knowledge as to the aims and functions of community centres, and to bring before the public in North-West Kent the work of such centres the Kent Council of Social Service is organizing meetings to describe the scope of such activities, together with the powers of local authorities under the Physical Training and Recreation Act, 1937."

That letter contained five words which he would like to recommend for adoption as a motto by all members of housing committees throughout the country and, if the author would allow him to make so crude a suggestion, by all housing directors: *Houses alone are not enough.*

He wondered whether it had ever occurred to the members to try to imagine what it felt like to be re-developed—to be transported from the existing conditions of congestion and accustomed dirt into the spacious bareness of one of Mr. Keay's new housing estates. One's home, perhaps for as long as one could remember, had consisted of two small rooms and a scullery fronting a mean street. In that home, besides oneself, there lived one's father and mother, two brothers and three sisters, to say nothing of young George, whom, two years back, some wise magistrate had removed to an approved school so that he at least should have a chance. One had been born in those two rooms; one's brothers and sisters had also been born there and ever since, with them, one had shared food and drink and clothing, health and sickness, the common bed, the common dirt and the common stench.

Then, when one had reached one's fourteenth birthday, one had gone out to get one's first job—just at the age when other boys were starting their careers at public schools. One had become a man; one knew much about life, birth and sex and even death was crudely familiar. As a man, therefore, one had gone forth to help maintain the home in which one had been born and reared and in which, according to all the laws of hygiene and sanitation, one certainly ought to have died. How, then, had one spent one's leisure and one's evenings on returning from the day's work? Had one come back to the same room in which father was finishing his tea and Florrie was washing up over the sink, with mother suckling the baby at the fireside and little Ernie in the perambulator screaming until he seemed about to burst? Of course one had not. Ever since one could walk, the street

had been one's playground. Grown older one had naturally gravitated to the corner of the street—a very dangerous place for youth. There one had gossipped with other lads, hands in pockets, cap askew, a cheap cigarette behind one's ear. And when mother and father had finished their tea, had they spent their evening in that cramped home? Of course not. Father, when he was flush, went to the public-house or to the cinema ; and when he was not flush, there had always been the doorstep and the social life of the slum court. Every member of that family —father, mother, brothers and sisters, were common members of one club. And the name of that club was The Street.

Then one day the local authority, in its wisdom, scheduled that street as overcrowded. And that family, with many others besides, found themselves part of a re-development plan. They were transported, if they were lucky, to a nice clean new house; or, if they were less lucky, to a nice clean new flat. Gone was the squalor, gone the filth and the vermin. But something else very important had gone besides, namely, the street life, the social club of the slum court of which all the family were life members.

Houses alone were not enough. Far too slowly were housing authorities in this country realising that when they re-planned an area they had to do something more than just build new houses; they had to give something to their new community which would replace the social life of the street corner which they were taking away.

Two years ago the Juvenile Organisation Committee of the Board of Education had made an investigation into this very matter, examining conditions on municipal housing estates throughout the country; they had reported towards the end of 1936 on the need for youth community centres on new housing estates and he would quote two paragraphs from that report:—

> " It will be seen that only rarely has it been found possible to provide a community centre for any of the new housing estates. Nowhere has a centre yet been provided adequate to the needs of the community. In those areas where a centre has been provided for adults, juveniles have some share in it, but nowhere has a separate centre been provided for the use of juvenile organisations.
>
> " For want of suitable buildings work among juveniles is gravely hampered, and on some of the estates is hardly in evidence. While, therefore, new houses have been built in very large numbers, there is a danger that the policy of providing a satisfactory environment for those hitherto living in slums will not be completely fulfilled unless provision is made for the social welfare of dwellers on the new estates."

That had been written two years ago. Since then something had been done, largely due to the stimulating influence of the Physical Training and Recreation Act, which provided grants to local authorities for that purpose. But nothing like enough had been done yet. To take London as an example. That juvenile delinquency was produced by bad housing conditions and overcrowding was axiomatic ; and one would expect the converse to be the case when those conditions did not prevail. But unfortunately one found—and it was a distressing discovery—that on the new estates of the London County Council round about the Metropolis, the percentage figures of juvenile delinquency were no lower than in the remainder of London.

The speaker spent a good deal of his time in another capacity in South-East London urging boys and girls to join clubs, scout troops and the like, and it was most distressing when a probation officer came and said that it was no use giving such advice to some child who lived on, say, the Downham or Mottingham estates as there was not a club which he could join which was within a reasonable distance of his home. The same thing applied frequently in the provinces, where he had seen the estates of a number of large cities, and frequently he had talked to those responsible for designing those estates, asking them what they were doing with regard to clubs, community centres and playgrounds. Far too often the answer had come, rather smugly: " Oh, we leave that to voluntary enterprise. We are particularly fortunate in the excellence of our voluntary services in this area." But what could voluntary enterprise do on a new estate where no provision was made for clubs, community centres, playgrounds, etc., at the outset?

He submitted that the real cause of the trouble, certainly in the past, had been that it was nobody's job to provide such facilities. The housing committee would pass the job to the education committee. The education committee would call a conference, and by the time the conference was over the estate had been built up and the opportunity lost. He was not for a moment suggesting that it was the function of the local authority themselves to run clubs for boys and girls. What he had seen of the work of local authorities themselves running community centres had been unfortunate. But although it was not the job of the local authority to run those activities, it *was* their job at the outset to plan for them and afterwards to see that they were run by qualified people. It was rather like the planning of a shopping centre. One might say that the two things were analogous. The housing authority had all the information at their disposal. They knew how many families there were to be re-housed. They designed the shopping centre at the beginning,

allocating them to convenient parts of the estate and letting them to appropriate tradesmen. So should it be with community centres and clubs. The Housing Authority should provide for those things at the beginning, and later see to it that they were run by the right people and on the best advice. In that connection such bodies as the National Council of Social Service, the National Association of Boys' Clubs and kindred societies were only too willing to co-operate.

His only reason for having talked so long was that that aspect of housing re-development was to his mind so vitally important and so often overlooked. In any re-development plan the authority ought not to be content merely to re-develop houses; they must do more. They must seize their opportunity to re-develop at the same time the habits and the characters of the people, lest posterity should look upon their handiwork and say "Wherefore this waste?"

Mr. C. C. Moore (Fellow), in supporting the vote of thanks, said he had to admit that he had practically no experience of re-development plans, because he thought he was right in saying that in London there had been so far only one re-development plan introduced by the London County Council. He would therefore like to try to tempt Mr. Keay to answer one or two questions, the answers to which might help members in the future.

Mr. Keay had given as the cost of his housing accommodation a figure of about £850,000. As Mr. Keay was rehousing 6,000 persons, that appeared to be about £500 a flat. If the average rent were 12s. 6d. a week, then the return from those flats would be about 4 per cent. on the cost, in which case there would not be the need even for a rate of ½d. in the £.

It was of great importance to an owner to know whether he would be entitled to re-develop his own property on the lines proposed in the re-development plan, and it rather appeared from the paper that the writer contemplated that, under Section 50, the owner could offer to carry out the re-development himself. If that was suggested, was he (Mr. Moore) right in saying that, under Section 52, the local authority had the first preference because, in effect, Section 52 disposed of Section 50 where a re-development plan was concerned?

He would be glad if Mr. Keay would state whether he considered that an owner could himself re-develop in view of the First Schedule, Section 5 (*b*), where there were certain grounds set out under which the Minister had to hold an enquiry. One of those grounds was the willingness of an owner to undertake his own re-development. Had Mr. Keay any experience of an

owner making that offer and of the property thereupon being taken out of the plan?

Mr. Keay had referred to the necessity of close co-ordination between town planning and housing authorities. One of the factors which gave one diffidence in re-development was that, generally, the town planning authority was the same as the housing authority.

On the question of town planning he desired to make a further attempt to induce Mr. Keay to give some further information. In zoning under town planning an owner did not receive compensation for a particular kind of zoning. Did the same apply under a re-development plan? If a man had a factory which happened to come in the part of the area decided to be used for housing, and if, in the plan, that factory was shown to be used in the future for housing, did the owner of the factory receive compensation on the basis of a factory?

Mr. Keay had referred to the fact that Parliament had directed that re-development should be the normal method of dealing with those districts in which bad planning existed. Might he ask Mr. Keay most respectfully why he said that Parliament had directed re-development to be the normal way? The authorities could proceed by two forms of Clearance Order. If they wanted land for housing they had Part V. of the Housing Act ; they had their Town Planning Acts and they had their Ribbon Development Act. In fact it seemed that the Acts had reached a condition of congestion comparable somewhat to the bad planning of the houses which they were designed to improve!

It was always a difficult matter for an owner to oppose a local authority's scheme ; the owner felt that he was up against a large corporation with public funds behind it and all its statistics, and he was very much inclined, as time went on, to feel that the housing authority would get its own way and that there would be no point in his objecting. Although Parliament desired that re-housing should be undertaken, it had in the innumerable sections of the Act tried to put some check on the plans that were put forward. The *length* of the Act was due, not to Parliament's desire for rehousing, but to see that individual ownership was safeguarded ; and to-day, when the country was still run on private enterprise and private ownership, Parliament had decided that those safeguards should be imposed. On the other hand there were local authorities with large schemes spending public money. These schemes were not necessarily designed by Mr. Keay ; they might be designed by other people, and it was right that they should be given the widest possible examination.

Although he must admit that he did not share Mr. Keay's

enthusiasm for the Act, yet he did not think that that in the least detracted from the thanks which were due to Mr. Keay for a very valuable paper.

Mr. H. J. Manzoni (Visitor) (City Engineer and Surveyor of Birmingham) was also very pleased to have the opportunity of supporting the vote of thanks to Mr. Keay. It could fairly be said that he probably knew more about the practical application of the re-development sections of the Housing Act than almost any other man in England. Those who were bound to follow in Mr. Keay's footsteps liked to hear some of the problems which he had solved, in so many cases very satisfactorily. He had been most interested to hear Mr. Keay say that a re-development scheme was the cheapest form of public work, adding that there were all sorts of ways of getting the money back. He would very much like, as time went on, to consult Mr. Keay as to those ways of getting money back, because in connection with the first resolution which his own Council had been asked to pass, he had had to run a gauntlet composed of members of the Finance Committee who had all wanted to know just how much it was going to cost and what it was going to mean to the rates, and all he had been able to tell them was that in connection with the re-housing of so many slum families, or so many houses to be condemned, they were in any case committed to a sum of so much. In re-developing an area of the nature under discussion one was bound to have to spend more money than that, because there were industrial premises to deal with. There were also many other features, such as the doing away with roads and sewers and constructing new roads and services. Most of those items, however, would, in some form or another, be revenue-producing. So that above and beyond the commitment for re-housing it was almost impossible to say at the time of the first resolution what the total cost would be. It was possible to make an estimate of the amount of money which might be spent, but it was the income which was so indeterminate.

Mr. Keay had spoken of the number of licensed premises on a site. Personally he did not know whether the people drank more beer in Birmingham than did the people in Liverpool, but there was certainly a very big proportion of licensed premises in areas of that nature, and one could imagine that there would be some revenue to come back from the re-allocation of sites, just as there would from the re-allocation of sites for industrial purposes; because if one compensated an industrialist in order to secure his site for building houses, it could be imagined that an

endeavour would be made to replace him in the area, when undoubtedly, having been compensated, he would be a source of revenue in the future.

To his own mind, one of the chief advantages of the present form of re-development procedure was that one was enabled to plan a re-development area as a complete unit. One would not build a housing estate, as had been done previously, in so many situations ; one would think of the area as a small town—a town where industry, housing and social services were all intermixed, and also where proper open spaces, playing fields and, if the area was large enough, even parks could be provided where hitherto there had been nothing but a mass of derelict or semi-derelict bricks and mortar.

He did not desire to ask too many questions of Mr. Keay because, having gone through most of the preliminary procedure, he thought he was fairly well conversant with the details, but he did desire to ask the following question: If in his schemes Mr. Keay bought out any industrial property, did he find that it was absolutely necessary to purchase that property within two years of the passing of his scheme? To himself one of the biggest difficulties in an area of any size was the necessity of purchasing housing property within six months and other property within two years. He knew that that period of time was governed by the words " or such extended time as may be allowed," but it did seem a very short time in which to make all the necessary purchases, and he would like to know whether Mr. Keay had come up against that trouble in any of his schemes.

Mr. J. R. Howard Roberts (Visitor) stated that it was particularly pleasing to him to be present that evening, as he had had the privilege for some time of working alongside Mr. Keay in Liverpool and of having had some small share—even if it was only a lawyer's share—in some of the work done there by Mr. Keay in connection with re-housing and slum clearance. He said " even only a lawyer's share " because, after all, as had been already indicated, it was an extraordinarily interesting and enthralling problem which was being discussed that evening. The lawyer was concerned with the least interesting part of it; the idealistic part was principally in the hands of those like Mr. Keay, who had the privilege of advising authorities who were embarking on great re-development schemes. Nevertheless, even from the lawyer's point of view, and perhaps, if he might be permitted to say so, from the point of view of a gathering like the present, considerable interest, even from the most sordid

aspect, arose in considering such matters, because he had not the least doubt that a large number of those who had had the pleasure of listening to Mr. Keay's paper would have the opportunity at some time in the not far disant future of doing their best to contest either the efforts of the London County Council or of some other body in their efforts to put through schemes of the kind under discussion; and he could only hope that, having had the matter put before them from the point of view that they had that evening, their efforts would perhaps be tinged just a little more from the standpoint of the public interest rather than from the standpoint of the interests of the particular owner which they might be representing on the specific scheme.

He would not be tempted into the legal aspect of the matter by raising one or two conundrums as to the relative merits between the clearance procedure and the re-development procedure, or the possibility of the two even running simultaneously; there was certain aspects of the matter which were of particular interest to lawyers in that connection; but he would content himself by very cordially supporting the vote of thanks to Mr. Keay, and by thanking The Institution for having given him the opportunity of being present and listening to the paper.

Mr. H. W. S. Francis, C.B.E. (Visitor), remarked that he was not now connected with housing work at the Ministry, and therefore was not in a position to add much in the way of discussing the work which was going on at present. He was glad to have the opportunity of congratulating Mr. Keay on his paper and on the work he was doing.

It occurred to him that it might be interesting to those present to know how the re-development area procedure began in its present form. It began by his having before him clearance areas under the old legislation where obviously the right thing to do was for the owners themselves to get together and re-develop the area, to their own profit and to the advantage of their tenants. The one thing wanted was to get a willingness on the part of the owners to co-operate. He had tried three or four times to get that but had found it was impossible. Then as a Londoner he had looked at Kingsway and Charing Cross Road and the big improvements there, and he had made inquiries as to how far those improvements involved a net cost to the local authorities. He had had discussions with a number of people, including Mr. Keay and Mr. Frank Hunt, and he had been assured that a large scheme like that of Kingsway, although it involved a heavy commitment of capital and although

for a long period there was no return on the investment, yet in the long run, when every fact was taken into account, would prove remunerative. The idea which had been first put to the local authority and to his Minister was that there should be a partnership between the Government and the local authority before the Government would assist in facing the heavy liability for the investment, but that the Government was to share in due course in the recoupment which would be obtained. Unfortunately that again had fallen to the ground. Neither the Treasury nor the local authority would have it. Then, under the guidance of Mr. Hunt and Mr. Keay, a return had been made very largely to the scheme which was included in the 1936 Act. He had been certain that it was sound to avoid the problem which Mr. Keay had mentioned, namely, that of transport, when one came to huge aggregations of population like the modern city represented. He believed it could be done over a period of years without undue cost. The scheme was quite a young one. It was still a healthy baby. The Act had been passed in 1935. According to the return which the Department had given him that day, there were now 300 acres included in re-development areas. It was known that those 300 acres were merely the forerunners of others, particularly in London, and he had just added to that figure a further 276 acres, which was the Birmingham figure. The greatest care had been taken, both in the preparation of the Bill and its passage, by his Minister and by the lawyers, to make sure that the rights of the private owner were respected to the utmost. So far as he remembered the Bill, there was no reason why any of the members of The Institution should be instructed to appear in opposition to a re-development area on any other ground than that of prejudice or unwillingness to move; and he hoped that when they were so instructed they would not find it inconsistent with their duty to remind their client that his interests had been very carefully considered and that, after all, the future of the big towns of this country, and the well-being of the working classes in them, were matters which owners of property were bound to consider.

The PRESIDENT then put the vote of thanks which was carried by acclamation.

Mr. L. H. KEAY, in acknowledging the vote of thanks, said he would follow the precedent set by a previous speaker at one of the Institution's Ordinary General Meetings in replying in writing to the question raised by members in the course of the discussion.

He desired to thank Mr. Kelly, Mr. Watson and the other speakers who had joined in the vote of thanks. He had what had been described as a plain modern office in Liverpool and he wondered if before long he would receive an artistically designed motto: "Houses alone are not enough." If he did he could assure Mr. Watson that it would be given a place of honour.

He thought that the vote of thanks really ought to have been accorded to Mr. Francis, who he was exceedingly pleased to see as he was the "father" of the re-development clauses of the Act under discussion, and who he felt must be very proud of what was now being achieved. It might be interesting to recall that within two months of the passing of the Act of 1935 the first "child" saw light in Liverpool in the guise of the Central Re-development Area. Since then six others had appeared. Personally he felt that he was only acting as a "nurse" and was doing his best to rear the "children" of which Mr. Francis had accepted "parentage."

He thanked the members very much indeed for their vote of thanks and for the attentive way in which they had listened to what he felt might have been a rather dry paper. Architects, like soldiers, were not necessarily lucid speakers; they knew the task before them and were content to be judged by the work they carried out.

The following written reply has been received from Mr. KEAY:—

MR. JOHN A. WATSON.

I fully realise the social upheaval caused by large re-housing schemes, and am aware that in the zeal for the physical re-development of a district the need for aids for the development of the individual may be overlooked. I am glad to say that in one scheme in Liverpool a boys' club and a girls' club have been provided, whilst in another accommodation has been allocated to Boy Scouts, while in the Central Re-development Area a playground of over 3 acres will adjoin a large community building.

MR. C. C. MOORE.

1. Under Section 50 of the Act owners can themselves submit a scheme for re-development. If the scheme is considered satisfactory, the local authority will approve it and specify the times within which the re-development is to be carried out.

If the local authority has taken the initiative in respect to any area and prepared a re-development scheme, any proposal by the owners for dealing with the whole or part of the area will be deemed to be an objection to the proposals of the local authority and be dealt with at the public inquiry.

Owners can themselves carry out re-development of the whole or part of any scheme proposed by the local authority as contemplated in Section 36 (2).

2. In acquiring land in a re-development area the compensation payable would be based on existing user.

3. Mr. Moore is correct in pointing out that the average number of persons in the families existing in the Central Re-development Area before the operations began is lower than the usual average found in clearance and re-development areas. The reason can be readily understood when it is known that a considerable part of the area is composed of streets of large four-storied houses originally built for the accommodation of comparatively wealthy commercial families at the beginning of the nineteenth century. For many years now they have been sub-let, and many of the "families" are of single persons, hawkers, market porters, dockers, and the like. This, of course, reduces the normal average very considerably, and incidentally provides a difficult phase of the re-housing problem.

4. The rent calculation of Mr. Moore is much too optimistic. The rents of flats, including rates at 15s. 6d. in the £, ranging from 3s. 6d. per week for a bed-living-room flat to 9s. 6d. per week for a four-bedroom flat, when considered in conjunction with the capital cost per flat, show sufficient indication that the financial aid of the Exchequer and the rates is well warranted.

5. In questioning the statement that Parliament had indicated that procedure by re-development was to be the normal method, Mr. Moore should not confuse the reasons for the adoption of other methods, such as clearance orders, Part V. of the Housing Act, the Town Planning Acts, and the Restriction of Ribbon Development Act. The circumstances of the area to be dealt with are the test, and it was clearly set out in Section 34 of the Housing Act that in certain circumstances it became the *duty* of the local authority to proceed by way of re-development. I have always regarded the execution of a duty as a normal proceeding.

Mr. H. S. Manzoni.

Groups of insanitary properties in an area are often in one ownership, and in such cases there should be little difficulty in

completing purchase within six months after the approval of the re-development plan.

It is my experience that less inconvenience is caused to industrialists and others if purchases can be effected within the specified periods, and for that reason I should prefer to deal with ten areas, each 50 acres in extent, rather than with one area of 500 acres, as the smaller areas could be more rapidly dealt with. It is often more disconcerting to an industrialist to know that he *may* have to move in ten or fifteen years' time than to be told he *must* find alternative accommodation in two years.

Paper 582.

TOWN PLANNING IN LONDON.

By G. Leslie Head, M.Inst.R.A.

Paper to be discussed at the Ordinary General Meeting of the Chartered Surveyors' Institution on Wednesday, 2nd March, 1938.

Introduction.

The purpose of this paper is twofold: firstly, to forecast, from the evidence at present available, the general tendency of the London town planning schemes which are now in the process of being drafted, and, secondly, to criticise them by examining their effects upon the economy of the building world.

With those parts of the schemes which will concern themselves with the preservation of buildings of historical interest or with the provision of public open spaces I do not propose to deal. It is my intention to restrict myself entirely to the question of the re-development of London by new buildings.

In order to accomplish this task it will be necessary, first, to consider the circumstances which called town planning into being and the purpose for which it is required ; then to investigate the general principles which should be observed in applying it in practice, and more particularly in the case of an already developed area, such as London, and finally, to point out the directions in which town planning, as we have reason to think it will be applied, will affect the re-development of London and the value of its land.

These are matters which concern not only the landowners, the architects and the surveyors, but also the whole building trade and, more indirectly perhaps, a very large section of the general public.

So far as London is concerned town planning is a new form of legislation, and a highly experimental one at that. It is a subject upon which there can be many and varied opinions. It is, I think, not too much to hope that this paper will give rise to the expression of some of them while the schemes are still hatching, for it will be too late when they become law.

The Objects of Town Planning.

The Town and Country Planning Act (1932) describes one of the purposes of a scheme as being the control of development. From this we may deduce that development hitherto has not been considered entirely satisfactory, and that there is sufficient room for improvement in this connection to warrant the imposition of control. There is no doubt that the development of land in the past was not altogether ideal. There was an element of the haphazard and a lack of foresight which resulted too often in the erection of unsuitable buildings which rapidly became obsolete and had to be converted in a more or less unsatisfactory manner to new uses. There was a lack of co-operation between adjoining landowners which gave rise to badly mixed developments and to an extravagant waste of amenities. It is to remedy this lack of co-operation and to guide the policies of landowners in respect of development that town planning now receives official recognition.

In its broadest sense town planning means the co-ordination of the future development or re-development of land in accordance with a preconceived plan to the mutual advantage of both public and private interests. It should aim at the encouragement of development when and where it is needed, and at the prohibition of developments of a type

which are likely to be injurious to local amenities. It should ensure that each development, in its turn, takes its place in the plan so that, out of many parts, an organised whole may be built up.

As applied to London, town planning must aim at making a better and more comfortable city than would otherwise have been the case. It is its duty to secure creditable architecture in the place of that which is destroyed. It must produce the type of accommodation which the public demands, for it should be the servant of the public and not its master. If it fails in these objects town planning will not have justified its existence, but will be a drag upon the wheels of progress and an unwarranted drain upon both the public and the private purse.

Machinery.

The Act.

The Town and Country Planning Act of 1932 was passed to form a basis for town planning throughout the United Kingdom. One of its provisions gives local authorities the right to frame regulations for the control of building and of the use of buildings. The general scope of such control is set out in the Act, but the details are left to the local authorities, with the proviso that before any set of regulations or scheme, as it is described in the Act, can become law it must be approved first by the Minister of Health and then by Parliament. As schemes are expected to take a considerable time to prepare and to prevent a feverish rush to erect uncontrolled buildings before the shackles are finally riveted on, building, in the interval between the decision of the local authority to take advantage of the Act and the time when its scheme becomes law, is to be controlled under an Interim Development Order issued by the Minister. Broadly speaking, this order is to the effect that no private development of any kind may take place without the consent of the authority.

This is the stage now reached in the case of London.

The London County Council in May, 1935, passed a resolution to prepare schemes under the Act to bring the greater part of the metropolis under town planning control. No schemes yet exist ; neither have any draft schemes been published, although these are in the course of being prepared. Until these schemes become law, building in London will continue to be controlled by the Interim Development Order.

The Attainment of Town Planning Objects.

It has been said that town planning and good estate management are synonymous terms. This is probably true if the town planning to which we refer is good town planning, but if it is not, then the similarity ceases. An unsound scheme as a remedy for unregulated development is worse than the disease, for it must eventually break down for economic reasons and through lack of capital to carry out the development which it requires.

In the preparation of a scheme we must bear in mind that it is not enough to lay down regulations and formulate a plan in the pious hope that building owners will fulfil it. The best intentions in the world are not sufficient by themselves to carry out reforms ; there must be a driving force to do this, and as this force has not been provided by the Act it must be created by the schemes.

The Act and the schemes which it begets are permissive and not conscriptive—*i.e.*, they do not enforce development whether the owner wishes it or not. It is obvious that, if development is to take place at all, it must be of such a nature as will be acceptable to the person who is to pay for it. It follows, then, that as the public cannot be forced to develop they must be encouraged to do so. Encouragement is the driving force by which town planning must achieve its ends.

In order to provide encouragement it is necessary to understand the economic laws which govern the develop-

ment of property. These laws are not man-made, but are natural as are those of Newton and of Kepler. No Act of Parliament, for instance, can make an apple fall upwards ; neither can it force a man willingly to seek profit where he is convinced that none lies.

Economic laws are not written in the Statute Book. They only come to our knowledge when we break them—and are punished. Our history is full of instances where legislation, ignoring economic laws, has had unexpected effects upon the community at large. An outstanding example of this may be found in the Finance Act of 1910 and in the decisions which followed it. This Act, which resulted in the setting up of the Land Valuation Department, was, after a brief trial, found to be a failure and was abandoned as a revenue-producing measure. Nevertheless the effect on the property market persisted, and it was years before the confidence of the public was sufficiently restored to allow development to proceed normally. The opinion is held by many that this Act was one of the causes of the housing shortage of 1919.

Town planning, then, if it is to control development, must first have some development to control, and in order to have this it must observe, harness and make use of economic laws and not ignore them. The regulations are to be the machinery, as it were, but the driving force must be the encouragement afforded by the observance of economic laws. These laws spring from the natural collective desire of the people each to do what he thinks will profit him the most. Briefly, a town planning scheme must be such a scheme as will induce a developer to implement the ideas of the authority. Any other kind of scheme can only result in the cessation of development and in stagnation. Such results in the face of a rising demand for accommodation and the desire for a higher standard of living are not those which a town planning scheme should aim to bring about.

Although economic soundness is of paramount importance in a scheme, there are three other qualities which must not be absent: precision, flexibility and simplicity. Precision

is essential to any code of laws or set of regulations. The public must be able to know by reading them just what it may or may not do. The practice of framing regulations for the express purpose of granting consents to infringe them is to be deprecated on the ground that it imports an element of doubt into the code and renders it valueless for the purpose of instructing the public. Instead of *" thou " shalt not "* we shall have *" thou canst perhaps, with our " consent."* Unless the conditions of such consent are definitely and precisely set out in the regulations, it is not possible to forecast the price which must be paid for permission to infringe the regulations and the certainty which is such an important factor in the preliminaries to a development will be absent. The principle of control by special consent is equivalent to undefined and arbitary control. Such a form of control would be practically a dictatorship.

Flexibility is required to prevent stereotyped development. Flexibility does not imply that the law should be relaxed in specific cases, but rather that the regulations should be sufficiently elastic to permit of many alternative solutions of the same problem. A set of regulations which will only permit of one solution will inevitably lead to a deadly monotony of design and to a stifling of imagination.

Simplicity is desirable in any code of regulations and more particularly in so far-reaching an experiment as we are now making. Multiplicity can only lead to confusion and the interaction of several regulations, each aimed at accomplishing the same end by different channels, may result in none of them doing their work efficiently. A few well-aimed and carefully considered clauses dealing with general principles are better than a large number which attempt to cope with the varying details which may crop up in individual cases.

A good town planning scheme should, therefore, be economic in order to encourage development ; precise to eliminate doubt ; flexible to prevent monotony ; and simple to promote efficiency.

The Application of Town Planning to London.

In applying town planning to London the same four essential qualities must be present in the schemes, namely, economic soundness, precision, flexibility and simplicity. Although at first glance London, being already built up, would appear to present a very different problem from undeveloped land, the difference, when it is examined, becomes one of degree rather than one of principle. Let us take, for instance, the question of economic soundness. In every case where re-development is desirable, and there will be no case where it will not become so sooner or later, it must be of such a nature as will show a profit to the developer. This profit is closely connected with land values. An examination of the origin and nature of land values will show us that they arise out of the use which may be made of the land.

In the case of virgin land the original value, being agricultural, is comparatively small, and almost any type of development will show a profit. In such a case the possibility of erecting even the least lucrative type of building will give rise to an increase of land values sufficient to make it worth while to abandon the old user and to adopt the new. Once developed, however, the land takes on an additional value due to the existence of buildings. This additional value gradually tends to decrease as the buildings become more and more obsolete. In the meantime, with the passage of years, the demand for accommodation tends to rise and undeveloped land to grow scarce. Consequently the price of bare land rises until it meets the descending value of previously developed land. At this point it begins to pay to buy developed land and to clear it in order to obtain sites. This stage has been reached in many parts of London, while in some others property is approaching its second or third re-development. Now the value of existing property depends entirely upon the rents which are obtainable from it and upon the expectation of life of the structure. As the amount of accommodation in an old building is fixed, the rental value can only fluctuate

on either side of the expected curve of depreciation to the extent permitted by any alteration in the general level of rents. Considered as a site, however, the value of an existing property bears no relation whatever to the market value of the existing buildings, but depends entirely upon the quantity and quality of the accommodation which can be placed upon it, *i.e.*, upon the rental value of the proposed building. If this rental value is large compared with that of the existing buildings, the market value will, in its descent, reach the level of the site value at an earlier stage of obsolescence than it otherwise would. On the other hand, if the rental value of the proposed building is comparable with that of the existing one, re-development is not likely to take place until the structure of the latter has reached the end of its life and is falling into decay.

It would appear, then, that to encourage the re-development of property before it reaches the final stages of decrepitude, it is necessary to allow such a re-development as will permit of a site value sufficient to cover the acquisition and destruction of the existing buildings.

Looked at from this point of view, it becomes clear that high site values are not necessarily the result of greed and scarcity, but are fixed by definite economic conditions. Any attempt to depress site values artificially will result in the delaying of re-development until obsolescence has reduced the value of the existing buildings to a proportionately lower level. Conversely high land values will tend to encourage re-development before the existing buildings have reached an advanced stage of obsolescence.

If, as in the case of Peter the Great when he built St. Petersburg, our task was to build an entirely new London on open fields, we should have a free hand to arrange the component parts of the city where they were most convenient. Questions of land values would not enter into our calculations, for, as bare land, they would be much the same over the whole site. We should be in the position of an architect who is commissioned to design a new building. This, however, is not the problem before us. London is

already built ; new land values have been created, and they are decidedly not the same in every part. We are in the position of an architect who has to alter an existing building and who has to make his ideas conform to what is already there, and our first step must be to make a survey of what exists. On this survey we must base our plan—not perhaps the plan which we should have adopted had we been unfettered, but the most practical plan we can find to fit the circumstances. We must study the past growth of London and forecast, and as far as possible provide for, its future requirements, both trade and residential ; but we must always remember that, in providing for re-development, it must be of such a nature and density as to be economic. It will never be economic unless the rental value of the new building so far exceeds that of the old one as to pay for the cost of its erection.

No scheme for London would be complete unless it gave some consideration to the traffic problem. This arises largely out of the size and arrangement of the town. Hitherto the bulk of the residential accommodation in inner London has been of an obsolete character, and consequently large dormitory suburbs have grown up round the outer ring. Only an insignificant proportion of the population can live within walking distance of their work. Practically every wage-earner in London has to make use of at least two vehicles daily ; in many cases it may be four or six. Moreover, they are generally used at the same time—in the morning and in the evening. With the population increasing at the rate that it is, the problem will become more and more acute unless a sufficiently large amount of proper residential accommodation can be provided at reasonable rents in Inner London. There are, as we know, large areas in these districts which are capable of carrying a far larger population and under better conditions than they do at present. There would appear to be good reasons, both from a traffic and an economic point of view, to encourage a concentration of residential accommodation in the inner ring rather than to distribute it diffusely over wide areas.

The London Schemes.

Although we have as yet no draft schemes upon which comment may be made, the London County Council have published a memorandum which gives us some idea of their intentions. This, taken in conjunction with the Model Clauses published by the Ministry of Health and the evidence which has come to light from actual cases during the period of interim development, does little to reassure us that the schemes are likely to contain the four essential qualities to a sufficient degree to encourage development. Except in certain and limited areas they appear to be definitely uneconomic ; they will everywhere lack precision, indeed they appear to be framed for the express purpose of being infringed by consent ; they will lack that flexibility which is necessary to prevent stereotyping and, finally, they are anything but simple and appear to attempt to arrive at some of their objects by means of more than one regulation.

Let us take the more generally known restrictions which are now being placed upon re-development. These are contained in the Council's memorandum mentioned above, and refer to the limitations of height, percentage of cover and nature of user.

Regulation of Heights.

It is proposed that the height of buildings shall be controlled in two ways:—

(1) by the limitation of over-all heights to a dead measurement above a datum ; different heights being permitted in different zones and for different users ; and

(2) by setting up angular limits of height, *i.e.*, by erecting imaginary inclined planes upon certain base-lines, and by prohibiting any building from breaking through them.

Limitation of Overall Heights.

The limits which it is proposed to place upon over-all heights vary from 100 feet to 40 feet, according to zone and user, as against approximately 100 feet hitherto permitted by the Building Act. In every district where the over-all height is to be fixed at less than the Building Act maximum, there will be a loss of potential accommodation and consequently of site value. As we have seen, an artificial depression of site values discourages early re-development and postpones it until the existing buildings reach a more advanced stage of obsolescence.

Even in cases where the imposition of an over-all height limit will not show such a loss of site value as to postpone re-development to an undesirable extent, the principle of a dead measurement above a datum is open to grave objections. It will tend automatically to the cramping down of storey heights and to the formation of flat roofs in order to squeeze as much revenue-producing accommodation as possible into the available height. In consequence it is to be expected that skylines will become monotonous and buildings stereotyped. It will not be sufficiently flexible. Further, it will tend to prevent the improvement of building design. There are, for instance, few solutions of the problem of fitting six storeys and a tank house into a height of 60 feet, and any solution must approximate to the following:—

	Ft.	in.
Six storeys at 8 feet 6 inches each ...	51	0
Five floors at 9 inches thick each ...	3	9
Flat roof 7 inches thick		7
Tank-house	4	8
Total ...	60	0

No consent would be necessary for this building, and it is the type which would probably appear automatically. Any attempt to improve the design by thickening the floors

for sound deadening, by raising the ground floor above the level of the pavement or by making the rooms more lofty and airy will have the effect of making the building illegal, and it will be necessary either to sacrifice a storey or to obtain a special consent. There is something illogical in having to obtain consent to improve the design of a building which would otherwise not require consent!

This lack of flexibility may result in whole districts of London having the appearance of being trimmed off with a gigantic scythe, pitched roofs will disappear and the whole effect will be monotonous in the extreme. To provide the necessary flexibility the overall height limit should not be expressed in terms of feet but in numbers of habitable storeys, leaving it to the operation of economic laws to discourage the formation of storeys or roofs of excessive height. An over-all height limit on these lines has already been suggested by the Minister of Health, but it is apparently not being adopted by the Council. (Model Clauses (1935), Appendix II., Part I., No. 5, Supplementary Clause 43A.)

The proposal to apply different limits of height to buildings of different users in the same zone appears to be illogical. There is no benefit conferred upon a residential building by robbing it of its topmost and, from the point of view of light and air, best storeys, while office blocks are to be allowed upon adjacent sites to rise a further 20 or 40 feet. Such discrimination is unfair, and tends towards the elimination of residential buildings from commercial areas where they are very often needed.

Angular Limits.

The effect if not the intention of angular limits is to give a definite intensity of light to the lowest windows opposite, and although by itself the angular limit is not capable of standardising this intensity, it will go a long way towards so doing. What it does is to give a standard intensity of light at the point from which the angular limit is taken,

i.e., at the street level on the opposite side of the road or courtyard. All windows on this side will receive a better angle of light than the figure of the angular limit ; how much better will depend upon the height of the window head above the road and the over-all height of the controlled building. The Council's proposal to treat internal courts and side and back spaces in the same way as roads ensures that every window of a habitable room will receive an angle of light at least equal to the angular limit and, in the great majority of cases, considerably better. In ensuring such a minimum angle of light a scheme will secure a most important object and will secure it without the assistance of the overall height and cover limits.

The angular limits proposed for London are to be drawn from the opposite side of the road or internal court at ground level. Limits governing the space in rear or to a flank (where such flank is used for lighting purposes) are to be set up from a point on the far side of the boundary as though the boundary was the centre of the space in rear (or to a flank) and such spaces were roads.

Although it may be agreed that, in principle, angular limits are necessary and efficient and that any loss of accommodation which they cause may be compensated for by the amenities of light and air which they provide, the method by which it is proposed to apply them is open to criticism.

Angular Limits on Street Frontages.

These are to be struck from the back line of the pavement on the opposite side of the road and at the level of that pavement. This means that the forecourt of the opposite building cannot be included in the width of the road, although the nearer forecourt is so included.

It may well be that the Council's idea is that the owner on one side of the road shall not profit by his opposite neighbour having set back his building. There is both reason and fairness in this idea, but it means that both parties will have to set back further than they would other-

wise need to in order to achieve a given height. Consequently both parties will be the losers, and the Council will gain more than it wants. There will be a waste of good building land and a proportionate loss of site value. A fairer way of striking angular limits would be to take the width of the street as either the distance between building lines or as the distance between forecourt lines plus twice the width of the near forecourt, whichever is the less. This, in effect, would be much the same method as has already been suggested by the Council when dealing with the space in rear, and there is no apparent reason why it should not be successfully applied to street frontages.

Angular Limits in Internal Courts.

It is apparently the intention of the Council to strike the angular limits in internal courts from the foot of the wall on the opposite side of the court. If this is so it will make the limit unnecessarily onerous in cases where habitable accommodation does not extend to the lower storeys. Experience has shown us that the Council, during the period of the Interim Development Order, have been content to strike this limit from the level of the lowest habitable floor, and there would appear to be no adequate reason for departing from this practice when framing regulations. Again, there is no distinction to be drawn between a court used to light habitable rooms and one which is only used to light bathrooms, water-closets, and the like. Both, in order to comply with the regulations, must conform with the same angular limits. That the latter class of court should be given the same generous dimensions as are allocated to the former is absurd and wasteful. Such courts are quite well looked after by the Council's own sanitary by-laws which were made as recently as 1930.

If these regulations eventually take the form foreshadowed in the Council's memorandum, they will inflict a loss of potential accommodation and a quite unnecessary damage to site values.

Cover.

Cover is described in the Council's memorandum as "Proportion of Plot." It means that, of any given plot or piece of land, only a certain percentage may be built over. It is proposed that cover should vary, according to the locality, height and user of the proposed building, from 33·3 per cent. in the case of residential buildings to 75 per cent. for offices and 90 per cent. for the lower stories of commercial buildings. In principle cover appears to be a secondary method of providing light and air space. Actually it conflicts with, and has no relation to, the primary method, *i.e.*, that of the angular limits, and is an example of the undesirable duplication of methods of control.

The system of angular limits already described will effectively prevent sites from becoming so crowded as to interfere unwarrantably with a reasonable angle of light to the windows of habitable rooms, and the further assistance of the cover limits is not necessary in order to achieve this end. Moreover, the angular limits will provide the air space just where it is needed, which is more than can be said of the cover limits. In the joint interaction of the cover and angular limits there are only three sets of circumstances which can arise. They are—

(*a*) when the angular limits prescribe a larger air space than the cover limits which, in consequence, do not come into operation and, for all the use they are, need never have been made ;

(*b*) when the angular limits prescribe an air space equal to that provided by the cover limits, in which case the latter are performing a redundant duty ; and

(*c*) when the angular limits prescribe an air space smaller than that laid down by the cover limits. This last is the only case where the cover regulations can function, and even then they can only succeed in providing air space in excess of that

required to provide a reasonable angle of light without any guarantee that such extra space will be in a position where it can be of any use.

Uselessly to sterilise good building land is wasteful, and can only have the effect of lowering site values to the detriment of the efficacy of the scheme.

A percentage limit of cover is, therefore, illogical and is not a form of control likely to give the best results. On the assumption, however, that it will pass into law, let us go on to examine the methods by which the Council propose to utilise it.

It is the intention of the Council to measure cover at the ground-floor level, except in the case of a building of mixed users where the cover appropriate to each user may be measured at the level of the lowest floor upon which such user occurs. So far as purely domestic buildings are concerned, there are many ancillary buildings which need only occur upon one floor. Boiler rooms, garages, wash-houses, sports centres and restaurants are a few which leap to the mind. All these will either have to be accommodated in the basement or else will have to occupy the limited and valuable ground floor space allowed by the cover regulations. As a consequence the habitable space lost on the ground floor will have to be replaced upon the upper floors, and buildings will tend to rise to their full height in vertical blocks or stacks with the same outline plan on each floor. Architectural breaks and features will tend to become eliminated altogether and the present tendency towards this form of stereotyping in building will be accentuated. Moreover, in the case of houses, a measurement of cover at the ground-floor level will tend to the formation of basements in which to place the outhouses and where they will be exempt from cover regulations. Basements, although sometimes necessary, are not such desirable features in domestic buildings as to require encouragement by town planning regulations. If cover were to be measured at the level of the first floor this objection would be met.

It is the intention of the Council to count as covered all parts of the site which are built over above the level of the ground floor, including those parts occupied by non-habitable portions of the building. This rule is likely to lead to undesirable developments owing to the cramping of the space allotted to staircases, corridors, lift wells, &c., which, by their nature, must occur on every floor and cannot be relegated to the basement. These items being amenities and only indirectly rent-producing will be the first to be cut down, and what might otherwise be a spacious and straightforward lay-out will become narrow, cramped and mean. Economic conditions to-day give quite enough discouragement to expenditure on items such as these without the additional disadvantage of having to lose a foot of revenue-producing habitable space for every foot spent upon amenities. To avoid cramped planning, only the habitable parts of a building should be taken into account. Economic laws may be trusted to prevent built-up but non-habitable space from becoming excessive.

It is the intention of the Council to exclude any parts of public, but not of private, roads from the area of the site for the purpose of calculating cover. Such exclusion is unfair both to the public at large and to the landowner. It is unfair to the public because they will have to pay more for land required for road widening. The acquisition of a strip of private forecourt by the Council will have the effect of reducing the area of the site and consequently of the amount of land which may be covered by buildings. As a result, the injurious affection of the remaining land will have to be measured by the loss of available building space. This may be considerable, and the compensation proportionately large. Had the roads been counted in with the site, the acquisition would not have reduced the available building area and the injurious affection from this source would be nil and the compensation nominal. It is unfair from the point of view of the landowner for he has the right to expect that he will not be asked to provide an air space, which, in view of that already provided by the

roads, may be in part redundant. There are three good reasons for allowing the owner the benefit of the roads:—

(1) In very few instances does the Council own the land occupied by the roads. It usually belongs to the adjoining freeholder, subject to the rights of the public over it ;

(2) the roads are unbuilt on and form part of the open spaces around a building, and, as such, credit should be given for them ; and

(3) they cannot be stopped up or built over without the consent of the Council.

The exclusion of public roads from site areas for the purpose of calculating cover is illogical, as the following example will show.

A building of a certain size might conform to the cover regulations if it abutted upon a private road or possessed a large private forecourt which could be included in the site. Such a building would be legal. But if, after its erection, a mistake was discovered and the road or forecourt was proved to be public, then, the site being so much smaller than was originally supposed, the building might be found to cover more than the permitted percentage and become illegal. Now the discovery of the real ownership of the road would have made no difference to the physical attributes of the building or to its amenities ; the air space surrounding it would be precisely the same and just as well secured to it as it was originally thought to be, and yet something has occurred to turn the building from a desirable one into what is, in the opinion of the Council, an undesirable one. It is difficult to see what this something can be, and an explanation from the Council would be welcome. There would seem to be no proper reason why the ownership of the road or forecourt, which can make no difference to the physical attributes of the building, should be a factor in the determination of cover.

The exclusion of the roads is unnecessary, and we must

remember that unnecessary regulations which, by restricting the potential capacity of land, cause a reduction of site value are not encouraging re-development but postponing it.

The percentage figures of cover which are suggested by the Council are in many cases far too low. I do not propose to deal with them exhaustively here ; they would require a paper to themselves. Let us, however, take just one example: that of residential buildings in Zone II., which extends over a very considerable part of London's residential areas. The cover laid down for buildings over 40 feet high is 33·3 per cent. In order to examine the effect of this cover limit upon site values it will be necessary to compare it with some reasonable standard of development which will permit of a reasonable angle of light to all windows of habitable rooms. Such a standard is to be found in the angular limit proposals of the Council. Let us therefore compare the area of land required for a building of a given size (*a*) when controlled solely by the over-all height and angular limits, and (*b*) when controlled by the Council's proposed cover limits in addition.

If we take as our example a building between party-walls and 40 feet deep and 60 feet high we shall find that, in order to comply with the angular limits, we require a plot 64 feet deep or, allowing for a 6-foot forecourt, 70 feet deep. The same building under the cover limit would require a site 120 feet deep—an increase of 71 per cent. on the amount of land required for the same accommodation. The same example taken in Zones I. and III. will show that 50 per cent. and 84 per cent. more land will be required respectively. These figures will, of course, vary with each different example taken, but it would not be an exaggeration to say that on the average London will require at least 60 per cent. more land in order to provide the same accommodation under the cover limit as under the angular limits only. As a consequence site values may be expected to diminish by about 35 to 40 per cent. Such a diminution would be very serious from a re-development point of view, especially when it is added to the depreciations which may

be expected to occur by reason of the other regulations. While we are dealing with the subject of percentage cover, it is interesting to note that the Ministry suggest (Model Clauses (1935), p. 54) that a 33·3 per cent. cover is suitable for residential buildings *on the outskirts of towns* where it is to be presumed development is taking place for the first time. The same note hints that the figure would be normally inappropriate in the central areas of towns. Zone II. is certainly not on the outskirts of London, and it is already developed. Bristol, one of the few towns to have a town planning scheme in being, allows 60 per cent. cover for residential buildings over 30 feet high.

Density.

Density is really another form of cover. It is to apply only to single family houses in certain districts. In these cases a further restriction is to be placed upon the land limiting re-development to a maximum number of houses upon any given number of acres. This is the third regulation by which the Council hope to control the air space around buildings, the first two being the angular and the cover limits. Unnecessary multiplication of restrictions aimed at the same ends is undesirable, for it only leads to the compulsory observance of the most onerous restriction when the least onerous might have achieved the desired result. As a consequence there will be a waste of land and a loss of site value.

So far as can be seen at present it is not the intention of the Council to schedule any area, which is to be controlled by density, at a higher figure than twelve houses to the acre, and there are considerable areas in the central districts of London which are to be treated in this manner. Much of this land is now densely built over at the rate of perhaps 25 to 30 to the acre, and the conditions obtaining in these areas is far from ideal, not necessarily owing to dense building but rather to bad planning. It is obviously desirable that the obsolete buildings in these districts should be

swept away, but whether it will ever be economic to replace them with houses at twelve to the acre is in the highest degree problematical. A house built under such conditions would have to carry on its back the acquisition and destruction of at least two of the older houses in addition to its own cost of construction. It is unlikely that an acre of land upon which it is only possible to construct twelve houses will ever be worth as much as a site as it is with the existing twenty-five or thirty houses upon it. And yet, until this condition arises, re-development upon the lines of the scheme is not likely to take place, and the present buildings will continue their journey along the path of obsolescence until they become slums. Here we have an example of how a scheme may defeat its own ends by creating slums instead of preventing them—a result which might be avoided by appreciating the principle that land, already made valuable by dense development, should be scheduled in a manner which will make it still more valuable if re-development is to be encouraged. This fact is recognised by the Ministry even if it is ignored by the Council, for we find on page 56 of the Model Clauses (1937) the following: "Averages "of 12, 8 and 6 to the acre are common standards "in new residential neighbourhoods, but authorities should "not adhere rigidly to a maximum of 12 where condi- "tions justify a higher figure. High cost of land, for "example, may make a higher figure necessary. In fully- "or partly developed areas a higher figure than 12 will "frequently be necessary." To which we might add the question, "And where is it more likely to be necessary "than in London?"

Regulation of User.

The Council have, in course of preparation, a map upon which the various areas or zones allocated to different users are to be shown. The many thousands of individual users are to be classified under ten main headings, each heading having areas reserved to it. The ten headings are shown

in Table A hereunder, but they are set out in a way which shows at a glance both the users permitted in each area and the areas reserved for given users:—

TABLE A.

Purposes for which buildings may be erected and used without the consent of the Council.	USE ZONES.									
	Residential I.	Residential II.	Intermediate.	Special Business.	Local Business.	General Busines.	Local Industrial.	Industrial.	Special Industrial.	Undetermined.
Houses	x	x	x	x	x	—	—	—	—	—
Flats	—	x	x	x	x	x	—	—	—	—
Residential Buildings	—	—	x	x	x	x	—	—	—	—
Places of Instruction	—	—	x	x	—	—	—	—	—	—
Places of Worship	—	—	x	x	—	—	—	—	—	—
Institutions ...	—	—	x	x	—	—	—	—	—	—
Offices	—	—	—	x	x	x	—	—	—	—
Shops	—	—	—	—	x	x	—	—	—	—
Places of Assembly	—	—	—	—	—	x	—	—	—	—
Business Premises	—	—	—	—	—	x	x	x	x	—
Light Industrial ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	x	—	—	—
Industrial	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	x	—	—
Special Industrial	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	x	—

NOTE: The spaces marked "x" indicate the users which are permitted without consent in the use zones shown by the vertical columns. The blank spaces indicate users which may only be made by consent.

Although these ten headings may be a desirable classification when dealing with an area about to be laid out for the first time, it is open to doubt whether they are sufficiently flexible to deal satisfactorily with the

inextricably mixed users to be found in London to-day. In town planning an already developed city we must work upon what is there and not upon what we think ought to be there. For this reason we are precluded from drawing fine distinctions as to different types of user and should direct our efforts at simplifying the classification. Let us see how this may be done.

There are really only four types of development which can be said seriously to conflict with each other ; they are (*a*) manufacturing; (*b*) commerce; (*c*) community residence; and (*d*) houses. If, therefore, we take these four types as main headings and add a fifth to form a buffer between the commercial zones and the purely residential ones, we shall reduce the number of zones from ten to five, and our five zones will be as shown in Table B on page 162.

The classification shown in Table B, being simpler than that proposed, is less likely to lead to restrictions which are more irksome than useful. A comparison of the number of blank spaces in the two tables will indicate the extent of the powers of undefined control which it is proposed to vest in the Council under this head alone. The blank spaces in Table B number thirty-six, and these represent cases where the Council may exercise their discretion and impose what conditions they think fit. In Table A the blank spaces number ninety-seven, and afford a further sixty-one opportunities for the exercise of undefined control. There is no doubt that, in the majority of these extra cases, proposals to infringe the regulations would be quite unobjectionable, but the mere fact that consent is necessary will give opportunities for the exercise of powers by the Council which would never have been knowingly granted them by Parliament.

In preparing a revised map along the lines indicated in Table B, we must take care that re-development is permitted of a type likely to prove economic. There will, for instance, be very few areas where economic re-development by small houses will be possible, and then only when the houses are of a comparatively expensive type.

And now as to the proposed map. Such parts of it as I

TABLE B.

Purpose for which buildings may be erected and used without the consent of the Council.	USE ZONES.				
	Residential.	Community Residential	Intermediate.	Commercial.	Manufacturing.
Houses	x	x	x	—	—
Flats	—	x	x	x	—
Residential Buildings	—	x	x	x	—
Places of Worship	—	x	x	x	—
Places of Instruction	—	—	x	x	—
Institutions	—	—	x	x	—
Offices	—	—	x	x	x
Shops	—	—	—	x	x
Places of Assembly	—	—	—	x	x
Business Premises	—	—	—	x	x
Light Industrial	—	—	—	x	x
Industrial	—	—	—	—	x
Special Industrial	—	—	—	—	x

NOTE: The spaces marked "x" indicate the users which are permitted to be made without consent in the use zones shown by the vertical columns. The blank spaces indicate users which may only be made by consent.

have been able to compare with existing development lead me to believe that the users shown thereon practically coincide with the present users. It is, to all intents and purposes, a "standstill" map. No provision appeared to have been made for the future extension of trade or business. On the contrary I have been able to find instances where commercial development, which has been proceeding for the last ten years, is ignored, and the land has been zoned as residential. By its very name town planning

means the organisation of the future and not, as the Council would apparently have it, the perpetuation of the past.

The migration of trade is a natural phenomenon which we can see going on around us every day. Trade goes where it can earn the most profits. To confine it to restricted areas without a chance of expansion is absurd, for this is an age when one either gets on or gets out. London's trade must expand or she will have to face the competition of trade in other towns where expansion has been provided for, and to face it with one hand tied behind her back.

The trade of London has grown up without the assistance of town planning, and we do not look to town planning to hinder that growth. Let us for a moment consider what would be the position of London to-day had she been town planned 200 years ago on a standstill map such as is now proposed. The whole of the West End and a good deal of the City and East End would have been reserved as residential and only sufficient commercial space would have been provided to satisfy the needs of the time. For the trade of to-day there would have been no room, and it would have gone elsewhere. We have no reason to suppose that, unhindered, trade will not expand very much more in the next 200 years, and when that period has elapsed we do not wish to see London, tied to her present-day zoning, taking a back seat amongst the commercial cities of the world.

One is reminded of the case of a once important town in Berkshire whose City Fathers were so short-sighted as to imagine that their town was sufficiently well established as to need no encouragement to maintain itself in its position. They strongly opposed the proposal to bring the Great Western Railway, which was then being built, to the town. Their opposition succeeded, and Brunel had to find another route. From that day they lost ground and were far outstripped by their neighbours on the railway. Do not let us repeat this sad history by opposing the legitimate demands of trade for more room. Let us set aside plenty of space for the expansion of trade and commerce.

While on the subject of user we cannot omit mention of the question of flats. The Council's memorandum makes no reference to them whatever, but experience under the Interim Development Order shows us that, upon certain areas, the Council are prepared to permit the erection of flats provided that they are satisfied with the plans. As to what qualities of flat design are necessary to obtain the Council's blessing we have only a few hints. We know, for instance, that communicating rooms appear to evoke their whole-hearted condemnation, although why this should be so is not clear, especially as these features form part of the designs published by the Council and carried out by them upon their own housing estates (L.C.C. Housing, 1927). Again, we know that the Council do not approve of single-room flats and will only allow them to the extent of 10 per cent. of the total number of flats in a block. Why a person who desires a single room should be forced either to pay for two or to share a two-roomed flat with another of like mind is a question which has yet to be answered.

It would appear, then, that so far as flats are concerned the Council are to be given *carte blanche* to do just what they think fit.

Dictatorial powers could hardly be more absolute than those which the Council propose to take.

Maintenance, Use, Alteration, Extension and Replacement of existing Buildings and continuance of existing use of land.

The above title is culled from the Model Clauses, and it covers those regulations which must be incorporated in any scheme which does not provide compensation for every injury done to an owner by the restrictions. We may assume that the Council will make use of these Clauses, otherwise the compensation for which they would be liable would be astronomical in its order of magnitude.

Briefly, the building owner is to have the right to rebuild his property to the same cubic capacity and for the same

use as before. From the building owner's point of view this concession is likely to prove quite useless, for it is very seldom that it is an economic proposition to rebuild to the same cubic capacity and for the same user as before. Unless the original buildings are a long way down the scale of obsolescence, the income obtainable from the new building is not likely to exceed that yielded by the old one to an extent sufficient to pay for the cost of rebuilding.

From a town planning point of view also the Clauses are objectionable, for they will tend towards the perpetuation of existing site boundaries. An owner, for instance, will be faced with the alternative of rebuilding his houses on exactly the old sites or of complying with unreasonable height, cover and density regulations. It is almost inevitable that he will choose the former course as the lesser of two evils, but he will not be able to take full advantage of modern ideas of planning for the positions of his party-walls will be fixed. There is no doubt that the only reason for the inclusion of these Clauses is to avoid the payment of compensation, for as a *quid pro quo* they are practically useless.

Review.

So far as the regulations are concerned, every one of them which we have considered will result in less accommodation than would have been available under the Building Act and consequently in a loss of site values. This loss will seriously affect the rate of re-development, which may be expected to slow up generally and perhaps to cease altogether in some districts. Unless we are prepared to face stagnation and unemployment in the building trade, some method must be found of restoring site values or, if we desire to quicken up the rate of re-development, of increasing them. Such an object can only be attained by permitting a substantial increase in the potential accommodation of a site, and there are only two ways of doing this—(*a*) by a lateral extension, *i.e.*, by covering more of the site ; and (*b*) by vertical exten-

sion, *i.e.*, by building to a greater height. The majority of sites to-day are so crowded as to offer no further opportunities for lateral expansion, and so the only alternative which remains to us is that of vertical expansion. The problem which has to be solved is, therefore, how we may obtain a maximum of height with a minimum of interference with amenities.

A solution may lie in the abolition of the proposed over-all height and cover limits and in the control of heights by means of the angular limits only. Let us examine the effect of adopting this suggestion. First we may imagine a cleared site surrounded by a number of imaginary inclined planes forming, as it were, a pyramid ; then, starting from lines within the site, which will represent the boundaries of the internal courtyards, there will be a second set of inclined planes forming, with a first, a number of smaller pyramids within the limits of which it will be possible to build without inflicting upon the lowest windows an angle of light steeper than the figure of the angular limit. It is my suggestion that building should be permitted to any extent within the limits of these smaller pyramids.

The type of building which this form of control would tend to produce would be one in which internal courts would not exist. Instead there would be a central tower, making full use of the height offered by the external angular limits, with wings projecting towards the boundaries of the site and becoming lower as they approached them. Such buildings would have many advantages over the more orthodox hollow square type. They would, for instance, give greater opportunities for variety in design ; the whole of the space usually given up to internal courts would be transferred to the outside of the building and added to that provided by the streets and where the public can have the advantage of it. Finally the frontage of the building would be broken up, and the streets would not present that narrow canyon-like appearance which is the usual result of unbroken 80-foot façades.

Control solely by angular limits will have its effect upon

the economic side of development. It will tend to encourage re-development by large blocks at a time, for such large sites will give better opportunities for high buildings than will the smaller ones. From a town planning point of view this is an advantage, for it is obviously better to have a few large-scale buildings with large air spaces which may be shared by the public, than to have a number of small buildings each with its own small air space unshared with the street or with any other building. Moreover, such a method of control would automatically provide its own cover regulation, for it is obvious that the higher the building the more space must be left unbuilt upon.

The suggestion that higher buildings should be allowed in London will be regarded in some quarters as revolutionary. The right conferred upon the Council by the London Building Act to permit habitable storeys at a greater height than that laid down is one of the most jealously guarded and little used powers of that body. The reasons for this reluctance are not altogether as clear to-day as they might have been fifty years ago. Then, no doubt, they were cogent enough, but that was in the days of wall-bearing buildings and horse-drawn steam fire-engines. There has been much technical progress since then, and it is surely not beyond our technicians to devise means of removing the difficulties which faced our predecessors.

Control.

The criticisms of the proposed regulations put forward in this paper will produce the reply—as they have done before—" Yes, what you say is all very well, but the " regulations represent the minimum of what you will be " allowed to do ; if you do not consider that to be enough, " all you have to do is to apply to the Council, for they " have it in their power to allow you to do as much more " as they think fit." This answer reveals to us the spectre which lurks behind town planning—the spectre of undefined control. The Council and the Minister are to be the arbiters

of what we are to be allowed to do over and above a given minimum, which is fixed so low that it does not, as a rule, represent an economic proposition. One is tempted to ask why we concern ourselves with the construction of a comprehensive code of regulations when their effect may be summed up in one sentence: *" No building may be erected " in London without consent, and the terms upon which " consent is granted shall be at the discretion of the " Council."* It is clear, then, that the Council intend to exercise a complete and arbitrary control, not only over general development, but over the actual details of the lay-out and planning of individual buildings.

Control of any sort requires to be exercised with the greatest caution. The building trade and its subsidiary trades and professions form the livelihood of a vast section of the community. The products of these trades form a channel for the investment of a large part of the nation's funds and house the whole of the country's trade and industry. It is necessary to tread warily when interfering with a system which has grown up as a result of trial and error over long centuries. It is undefined control with which we are threatened, and while it cannot be denied that if used discreetly and upon sound principles by skilled technicians it would be capable of effecting much improvement in the condition of our city, nevertheless the fact that it is undefined constitutes a formidable menace. It imports a serious effect upon the psychology of the building public, for by its vague and undefined character it creates at the outset an atmosphere of doubt, and there is no factor that has a more disastrous effect upon private enterprise than doubt.

A large percentage of re-development schemes to-day owe their inception to legitimate speculation on the part of persons who can see a profit in the transaction. It is comparatively seldom that the owner of existing buildings, except perhaps in the case of large estates, takes any part in the initiation of negotiations for re-development. In many instances the speculator himself becomes interested only when an agent

or an architect presents a cut-and-dried scheme to him. Negotiations with the owner frequently take place only when the speculator has satisfied himself as to the price he can afford to pay.

The existence of uncertainty as to the ultimate requirements of the Council must gravely impede the efforts of the initiator to bring off a deal. In many cases of development in the past it is safe to say that negotiations would not have been concluded had there been the slightest doubt as to the possibilities of re-development. It may be said that it is possible to remove this element of doubt by an application to the Council at an early stage. This is a lengthy process, sometimes occupying two months or even longer ; moreover, experience under the Interim Development Order has shown us that the Council is unwilling to consider any application which is not made with the authority of the owner of the property concerned. It is a frequent practice of the Council to communicate with adjoining owners before giving their consent, and this may lead to undesirable publicity which at an early stage is likely to be fatal. It would produce, in the mind of the speculator, the same effect as the " hawking " of a property does in the mind of a purchaser. It is to be expected, therefore, that undefined control, carrying with it the necessity for an early application to the Council, is likely to interfere with and prevent the fruition of quite a number of agent-incepted schemes without providing a proportionate increase in the number of owner-incepted ones. Consequently we may expect that, from this cause apart from any other, re-development will be slowed down.

This, however, is not the only effect which is likely to result from the presence of doubt. It is well known that the value of land is intimately connected with the use to which it may be put and with the accommodation which may be placed thereon. As a simple statement we may say that if the cost of erecting a building is subtracted from the market value of the finished building we shall have a remainder out of which we have to find two things: (*a*) the cost of the land

and (*b*) the speculator's profit or, as it is sometimes called, the adventurer's profit. With the fear of the unknown, which must always exist in the presence of undefined control, the speculator will be justified, when making his calculations, in increasing the allotment for adventurer's profit at the expense of the amount he is able to pay for the land. To this extent, therefore, undefined control may be expected to result in a loss of site values.

Even more detrimental and far reaching is the naked fact that undefined control, whatever its possible advantages, is a dangerous thing for nations such as ours, to whom such autocratic forms of control are strangers. This is not the place to stress the political aspect, but we cannot shut our eyes to the obvious dangers and difficulties which beset the introduction of a principle so unconstitutional and so foreign to a democratic country. We may well ask ourselves whither it will lead us.

Conclusion.

The criticisms contained in this paper may be summarised as follows:—

1. That, as far as we can tell from the proposals before us, the scheme will not provide for those future changes of users which are inevitable if London is to continue to progress. On the contrary it will check progress and will be used, not as a scheme to permit and encourage co-ordinated changes of user, but as a method of placing in the hands of the Council absolute and undefined control over all such changes.

2. That the regulations will be framed in such a manner as to render their strict observance in many cases an economic impossibility, and consequently applications to infringe them will become the rule rather than the excep-

tion. Such applications involve the exercise of undefined control and all that it implies.

3. That the onerous nature of the restrictions will, if the discretion of the Council is not exercised, result in the postponement of re-development and in the prolonged existence of obsolete buildings.

4. That the plan, the regulations and the overwhelming element of undefined control will, separately and collectively, tend to the depreciation of site values and to the consequent slowing up of re-development.

5. That undefined control to the extent proposed is a strange and dangerous thing to apply in a democratic country which has hitherto regarded dictatorial powers with suspicion.

It is the surveyor's duty to consider the practical effects which will result from these town planning proposals in London and to assess and to make known their incidence upon the interests first of the public and then of his own clients, so that all may understand their inevitable consequences. Thus enlightened, the community will be in a position to appreciate the meaning of the threat which confronts them and to take such steps as they think proper to combat it. Its object should be to ensure that both public welfare and private interests are duly regarded in the framing of the schemes which are to control all future building development and which, for lack of such regard, may prove to be the very reverse of the public benefit under the standard of which they are advanced.

Finally, to whatever decision this Institution may come with regard to the views expressed in this paper, it is without doubt necessary to take prompt action to ensure that the proposals of the Council may not pass into law without their being thoroughly examined and considered from all angles. Now is the time for such an examination ;

in a short time it may be too late and the damage may be done. We Londoners are justly proud of our great city, which we ourselves have helped to build, and while we would welcome any scheme which would make her better and finer, none of us would wish to see her in irons, her development arrested and her trade at the mercy of autocratic control. London is now the first city of the Empire. Let us see to it that she retains that proud position.